



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

HYBRID T38 Professional Standards Boards



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Employee Education System
and
Title 38 Hybrid Implementation Work Group
presents

HYBRID T38
Professional Standards Boards

Catalog Number: **HRSDV-EES-C099**
Start Date: **October 1, 2005 – September 30, 2006**



Brochure

Program Overview

Place

An Independent Study located on the EES web site.

Purpose

The Hybrid Title 38 Professional Standards Boards web course will include curriculum designed to help employees in Hybrid Title 38 occupations develop their knowledge and skills regarding the appropriate rules, processes and procedures governing Professional Standards Boards (PSBs). The lessons in this course contain basic knowledge information and skills development that can be applied to actual PSB situations.

Outcome Objectives

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- Define the purpose of Professional Standards Boards.
- List the members that comprise the Professional Standards Boards.
- Identify the role of the Chairperson, Board members, Technical Advisor and Approving Official in the Professional Standards Boards process.
- Match the three types of Professional Standards Boards to their functions.
- List the restrictions on Professional Standards Boards.
- List the personnel actions that require Professional Standards Boards.
- Identify excepted circumstances where a PSB is not required.
- Complete a Board Action Form.

Target Audience

The audience for this web course includes all CO, VISN and field staff who may be asked to serve on a Professional Standards Board (PSB) for their Hybrid Title 38 occupation as well as employees who are interested in understanding the PSB process.

Format

This web course has been designed to introduce users to the world of Professional Standards Boards (PSBs) for Hybrid Title 38 occupations. Specifically, the course provides an overview of the purpose and composition of PSBs for each hybrid group, as well as instruction on how to complete appropriate documentation to support recommendations made to the Approving Official(s) for appointments, promotions, etc.

Following completion of this web course, PSB members for each of the Hybrid Title 38 occupations will be required to attend additional training to review occupation-specific qualification standards and participate in mock PSB scenarios to reinforce content presented in the web course.

Continuing Education Credit

The Employee Education System maintains responsibility for the program. A certificate of attendance will be awarded for ½ hour credit to participants and attendance records will be on file at the Employee Education System. In order to receive a certificate of attendance, participants must complete 100% of the program, take the self-exams, and answer the questions on an evaluation and participant survey before printing out a certificate of completion.

Report of Training

It is the learner's responsibility to ensure that this training is documented in the appropriate location according to his/her locally prescribed process.

This Independent Study Includes:

- Online course content
- Self-tests to confirm knowledge acquisition
- Program Evaluation

Brochure

Test Materials

Independent Study questions for accreditation credit.

Independent Study Implementation Procedure:

1. Read the program materials provided in the package.
2. Complete the test questions at the end of each course.
3. Complete the program evaluation form.

Upon completing the online course and program evaluation, learners will be able to print a certificate of completion according to instructions.

Hybrid Title 38 Occupations Program Content

Lesson 1: Foundational Knowledge Development

The purpose of this lesson is to gain knowledge of the purpose of a Professional Standards Boards.

Lesson 2: Skill Development

The purpose of this lesson is to increase your ability to apply basic skills involving the appropriate processes and procedures used by Professional Standards Boards.

Program Development

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Deadline Date

The deadline for completing this independent study is November 1, 2005. Information regarding this online course may be obtained from:

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The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended

The Employee Education System wishes to ensure no individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently from other individuals participating in the web based training, because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services. If you require any special arrangements to attend and fully participate in this educational activity, please contact:

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Disclosure(s)

The Employee Education System (EES) must ensure balance, independence, objectivity, and scientific rigor to all EES sponsored educational activities. The intent of this disclosure is not to prevent faculty, author, planning committee member or presenter (discloser) with a significant financial or other relationship from presenting materials, but rather to provide the participant with information on which they can make their own judgments. It remains for the participant to determine whether the discloser's interests or relationships influence the materials presented with regard to exposition or conclusion. When an unapproved use of a FDA approved drug or medical device, or an investigational product not yet FDA approved for any purpose is mentioned, EES requires disclosure to the participants.

Foundational Knowledge Development

Introduction

Welcome to **Lesson 1: Foundational Knowledge Development**. The purpose of this lesson is to gain knowledge about Professional Standards Boards (PSB).

After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Define the purpose of Professional Standards Boards.
- List the members that comprise the Professional Standards Boards.
- Describe the role of the Chairperson, Secretary, Technical Advisor and Approving Official in the Professional Standards Boards process.
- Identify the three types of Professional Standards Boards.
- List the restrictions on Professional Standards Boards.
- List the personnel actions that require Professional Standards Boards.
- Identify excepted circumstances where a Professional Standards Boards is not required.
- Complete a Board Action Form.

Introduction to Professional Standards Boards for Hybrid Title 38 Occupations

Congratulations! You have been appointed to a Professional Standards Board (PSB) for your Hybrid occupation. Before the Board is convened, there are several things you will need to know about appropriate Board processes and procedures.

I'm sure you are eager to learn more about your new role as a PSB member so let us begin by finding out why we use Professional Standards Boards for Hybrid Title 38 employees. We will find our answer by taking a look at **38 U.S.C. 7403**. In essence, the law says that Title 38 employees shall be reviewed by a Board of their peers for appointments and promotions.

Professional Standards Boards (PSBs) are provided for in the law. Let us take a look at what our **VA policy contained in VA Handbook 5005 (Staffing) Part II, Chapter 3 Section 3** says about PSBs.

After reading the policy, you should be able to explain what you have learned about Professional Standards Boards.

- PSBs serve as agents of the Under Secretary for Health.
- They provide a peer review for all Hybrid Title 38 employees appointed under 7401(3) and 7405 (a)(1).
- The Board evaluates the basic qualifications of each person being appointed, recommended for promotion above the FPL, advancement for special achievement or performance.
- The Board determines eligibility and recommends the appropriate grade/level and pay step for appointment under Hybrid Title 38s and recommends candidates for advancement.

Key Learning Point(s)

1. **Professional Standards Boards serve as agents of the Under Secretary for Health**
This means Board members serve in a dual capacity. They must deal with matters from which they must divest themselves of their identity with their facility and become primarily concerned with the needs and challenges for the entire Veterans Health Administration.
2. **Professional Standards Boards are a recommending body**
This means they determine the eligibility for employment and recommend the appropriate grade/level and pay step for appointments and recommend candidates for promotion above the FPL and advancement..

Foundational Knowledge Development

Three Types of PSBs

There are three types of Professional Standards Boards: National Boards, VISN and Facility Boards.

National boards act on appointments, advancements, promotion above the full performance level, and on requests for reconsideration in situations in which the supervisor does not recommend promotion above the FPL and for actions recommended and approved by lower level boards.

VISN Boards act on Hybrid positions for appointments/advancements when a facility Board cannot be constituted locally and will consider requests for reconsideration or review of promotions initially considered by the Facility PSB or which require approval outside of the facility (e.g. where supervisors do not promote to the FPL).

Facility Boards act on all appointments/advancements of facility employees.

Key Learning Point(s)
There are three types of PSBs: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. National Boards;2. VISN Boards; and3. Facility Boards.

Introduction to Professional Standards Boards for Hybrid Title 38 Occupations

Composition of a Professional Standards Board

PSBs are composed of three to four members appointed under 38 U.S.C. 73 or 74 in the same occupation to the extent possible and in a grade or level equivalent to or higher than the grade and/or level of the employee who is being considered for appointment/advancement. All Professional Standards Boards consist of a Chairperson, and two to four additional members, one may serve as the Secretary in a voting or non-voting capacity. There is also a Technical Advisor (usually a Human Resources Officer or designee) who is responsible for advising the Board but who may or may not be present during sessions.

Here is a job aid showing the composition of PSBs by Hybrid occupation.

Position	Professional Occupations	
	Board Membership 1	-OR- Board Membership 2
Nurse Anesthetist	3 Physicians	2 Physicians & 1 Nurse Anesthetist
Physician Assistant (PA)	3 Physicians	2 Physicians & 1 PA
Expanded Functional Dental Assistant (EFDA)	3 Physicians	2 Dentists & 1 EFDA
Podiatrist	1 Physician & 2 Podiatrists	N/A
Optometrist	1 Physician & 1 Optometrist	N/A

Foundational Knowledge Development

* HYBRID Positions				
Position	Board Members 1	-OR- Board Members 2	-OR- Board Members 3	Chairperson
Respiratory Therapist (RT)	3 Physicians	2 Physicians & 1 RT	N/A	Physician
Physical Therapists (PT)	1 Physician & 2 PTs	2 Physicians & 1 PT	3 Physicians	Physician
LPN	2 RNs & 1 LPN	(HQ Only) 3 RNs	N/A	RN
Occupational Therapist (OT)	1 Physician & 2 OTs	2 Physicians & 1 OT	N/A	Physician
Pharmacist	3 Pharmacists	N/A	N/A	Pharmacist

* Three Probationary or permanent employees appointed under [38 USC chapter 73 or 74](#) or their alternates will comprise the board. Each board member will be in a grade equal to or higher than the grade for which the candidate is being considered. One of the members will be appointed as chairperson.

Only capable, experienced and responsible personnel may serve on Boards. Recommending officials will not serve on Boards considering their recommendations. Employees will not serve on Boards for which they serve as the Approving Official and may not serve on a Board for which they are being considered.

Boards are held at the facility, at VISNs and Nation level. The Under Secretary for Health approves membership for the National Boards and the Network Director establishes and approves membership for VISN Boards. The Facility Director approves membership of local Boards. Board members may not serve on a board until successfully completing the required training.

Key Learning Point(s)
All Professional Standards Boards consist of three members, including a chairperson and a secretary plus one additional Board member.
Employees will not serve on Boards for which they serve as the Approving Official and may not serve on a Board for which they are being considered.

Role of the PSB Members: The Chairperson

Now that you understand who can be a member of a Professional Standards Board, let's take a look at the role of PSB members.

You should review the policy found in [VA Handbook 5005, Appointments, Part II Section C, Professional Standards Boards](#).

Process for appointing the Chairperson, Secretary, and members to the PSB

The selecting official may consider nominees from Service Chiefs or equivalent, union representatives and from a pool of interested, qualified employees for appointment to the Professional Standards Board (PSB). The Selecting Official will also designate specific employees to serve as the Chairperson and Secretary to the PSB. Employees selected to serve on PSBs will be chosen from among the most capable, experienced, and responsible personnel.

Here are some qualities for selecting a PSB Chairperson.

- Experience interpreting qualification standards
- Ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing
- Ability to plan and schedule work
- In-depth knowledge of the occupation

Foundational Knowledge Development

- Ability to handle conflicts and negotiation effectively
- Current on new developments in their Hybrid occupation group
- Leadership skills

The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring that each member and alternates to the Board is trained in Board functions and that the qualification standards and VA policies are interpreted in a consistent manner. This means that each Board member understands his or her role as an agent of the Under Secretary for Health. Members must also understand that they serve a dual role. They must deal with matters that require them to divest themselves of their relationship with their local facility and become representatives for VHA. Lastly, members must be able to properly interpret the qualification standards and VA policies as they relate to appointments, pay and advancements. The Chairperson will decide when to convene the PSB.

Alternate Board members will be trained and ready to serve when a permanent Board member is not available or when the member's Board Action package is being considered. Each Hybrid Title 38 PSB should have at least two alternates.

Role of the PSB Members: The Secretary

The PSB Secretary may be a full voting member of the Board or may serve as a non-voting member. The Secretary is responsible for recording the Board's recommendations on the board action form and maintain any required records related to the Boards recommendations and any other required data. The Secretary records, prepares and submits notes of the Board proceedings and relevant discussion that took place during the session(s) to the PSB Chairperson. The Secretary is also responsible for completing page 2 of VA Form 10-2543 and obtaining signatures from the other Board members.

In situations where the Secretary may serve as a non-voting member, the PSB will consist of four members. The fourth member is eligible to participate in decisions and vote on recommendations. This is another example why each PSB must have alternate members.

The Technical Advisor

The Human Resources Officer or designee serves as the Technical Advisor for all PSBs. While not a voting member of the PSB, the Technical Advisor is responsible for advising the Board on laws, policies and procedures as they relate to appointments and advancements. They also review the Board's deliberation and recommendations to ensure they are consistent with all applicable laws and policies. Following this review, the Technical Advisor certifies the information contained on the Board Action form is accurate. If the Technical Advisor finds that the Board's interpretation or any other matter is inconsistent with policy and procedures, they are to advise and notify the Approving Official(s).

Approving Official(s)

Typically, the Facility Director, Network Director and the Under Secretary for Health (or designee) are the Approving Officials for their respective Boards. When the Facility Director is the Approving Official for a Board action, the Director's decision is final. This does not preclude an employee from requesting promotion reconsideration.

Key Learning Point(s)
Facility Director, Network Directors and the Under Secretary for Health (or designee) are the Approving Officials for Board actions.

PSB Exceptions

In some cases, Hybrid Title 38 employees may be appointed without action by a **Professional Standards Board**.

These excepted actions include:

- Temporary appointments;
- Conversions of appointments from full-time to part-time;
- Conversions of employee from temporary to permanent, provided the individual served on a permanent appointment previously; or
- Appointment of graduate technicians for specific Hybrid Title 38 occupations.

Skill Development

Introduction

Welcome to **Lesson 2: Skill Development**. The purpose of this lesson is to increase your ability to apply basic skills involving the use of Professional Standards Boards.

After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Document Board deliberation process.
- Complete the Board Action Form.
- Write appropriate recommendations and remarks to support the Board's recommendations.

VA Form 10-2543, Board Action

At the end of this lesson you will be familiar with VA Form 10-2543 for documenting all personnel actions recommended by the PSB.

VA Form 10-2543, Board Action is the primary document used as a basis for a variety of personnel actions, such as appointments, promotions, special advancements for achievement and performance, and pay adjustments. In addition to legal and regulatory requirements, the candidate or employee must meet appropriate qualification standards and/or criteria for the proposed action. These occupation-specific qualifications and/or criteria are contained in [VA Handbook 5005](#).

For the most part, data on each item of the Board Action form, coupled with the pertinent manual instructions, are normally self-explanatory and provide adequate guidance for preparation of the form.

There are several sections of VA Form 10-2543 that must be completed before being submitted to the approving official for final action. It is very important that VA Form 10-2543, be properly completed, that all statements contained therein be supported by documented evidence as necessary, that recommendations or decisions be based on a careful evaluation of the total record as compared to established criteria, and that extraneous or inappropriate material not be made a part of this form.

Components of VA Form 10-2543, Board Action

When the Board Action form (VAF 10-2543) is submitted to a PSB for consideration, the following sections should have already been completed by the requesting service or organization.

Item 1: Employee/Applicant's Name

Item 1A: Employee's Position

Item 1B: Employee's Grade and Step

Item 1C: Name of Station

Item 2: Name of Board

Item 3: Station of Board

Item 4: Date

Item 5: Findings — This section should include employment history, accomplishments, education/experience, licensure, professional certifications and any other information that may be included in a VAF 10-2850c (Application for Associated Health Occupations). Personal identifiers such as date of birth, SSN, or other information should not be included.

Skill Development

Here is an example of a correctly completed  VA Form 10-2543 (Sample 01).

Key Learning Point(s)
Be thorough when documenting Board deliberation process and basis/rationale for recommendations, which must be supported by qualification standards and applicable VA policies.
Documentation of Board deliberations should be available and complete in the event that a third party review is requested.

Process for Professional Standards Board


PSBs can meet either face-to-face or virtually to review the completed Board Action form (Items 1-5) and all accompanying supporting documents (commonly referred to as **Board Package**). For face-to-face PSB sessions, the Board members will collectively review and discuss the Board packages to reach consensus on appropriate recommendations.

For virtual Board meetings, members will receive a copy of the Board package prior to convening the PSB. These members will independently review the documents and be prepared to discuss their proposed recommendations with the other Board members. The Secretary of the Board will be responsible for distributing Board action packages.

For initial appointments, members of the Board will review the applicant's resume or VAF 10-2850c (Application for Associated Health Occupations) and other documentation (if available) to make a determination on whether he/she meets the requirements in the VA qualification standard. For advancements, the Board reviews an employee's qualifications by examining their personnel records, performance appraisals, the recommending official's evaluation and any other pertinent records to make a recommendation based on their findings.

Once the Professional Standards Board members have reviewed all relevant documentation, discussed appropriate Board recommendations and are ready to submit their written justification supporting their recommendations to the Technical Advisor and Approving Official(s), sections 6-10 of the Board Action form (10-2543) should be completed and signed by all Board members. The Board Action form is then submitted to the Technical Advisor for review and signature of Section 11. Once this form has been signed by the Technical Advisor, it is forwarded to the Approving Official for final action by completing Sections 14-16.

NOTE: For all business conducted by the Board, PSB members will maintain confidentiality of all information discussed before, during and after PSB proceedings.

Here is an example of a  Board Action form (Sample 02) (Items 6-11) that has been completed by a PSB following the review of an employee's Board package.

Summary

Summary of Key Points for Professional Standards Boards

Now that you have learned about Professional Standards Boards and their role in the appointment and advancement process for Hybrid Title 38 employees, here is a summary of the key points of this online course:

- PSBs serve as an agent for the Under Secretary for Health and are a recommending body only—decisions are made by the Approving Official.
- Boards are held in National, VISNs and local facilities.
- PSBs provide objective peer review in accordance with **38 U.S.C. 7403** and VA policy found in VA Handbook 5005, part II, chapter 3.
- PSBs are composed of three members consisting of a chairperson, secretary and one additional member in a grade or level equivalent to or higher than the grade and/or level of the employee who is being considered for appointment/advancement.
- A Technical Advisor is available for consultation and will review Board actions before sending to Approving Official.
- For Board proceedings, all members will:
 - Review Board package;
 - Work collaboratively in reaching consensus;
 - Document all Board deliberations;
 - Provide recommendations to Approving Official; and
 - **Maintain confidentiality of all PSB business.**

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